

2008

# Tips for Reduced Gasoline Consumption and Enhanced Fuel Economy, 2008

Maine Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security

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## Recommended Citation

Maine Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security, "Tips for Reduced Gasoline Consumption and Enhanced Fuel Economy, 2008" (2008). *Governor's Energy Office Documents*. Paper 23.  
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# Maine Office of Energy Independence and Security's Tips for Reduced Gasoline Consumption and Enhanced Fuel Economy

You can reduce your fuel consumption up to 30% through these fairly simple tips. For every gallon of gas that you save, you will save money. You will also keep 20 pounds of carbon dioxide, the primary contributor to global warming, as well as other unhealthy air pollutants, out of the air.

## **Optimized Vehicle Maintenance**

| <b><u>Measure</u></b>   | <b><u>Savings</u></b> |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>1. Keep your Car Well Tuned.</b> A well-tuned car uses less fuel. Give your car a tune-up twice a year, preferably in the spring and fall, and always get a tune up before embarking on a long trip.   | 3-20%                 |
| <b>2. Change Your Oil Frequently.</b> Change the motor oil frequently and keep fuel filters changed and clean. Use brand-name products and the correct oil weight. Check for oil leaks.   | 4-5%                  |
| <b>3. Maintain Proper Tire Inflation.</b> Low tire pressures can cause drag, which wastes gas. Check every two weeks and prior to a long trip to make sure tires are not under- inflated. Under-inflated tires are a safety hazard and can cause premature tire failure. Maintaining tires properly will also extend their life. Rotate your tires every 5,000 miles, and have the wheels balanced. | 5%                    |
| <b>4. Switch to Radial Tires.</b> Radial tires reduce friction. Radial tires can reduce gas mileage in town by as much as 5%, by 7% on the highway and by 10% after the tires are warmed up for about 20 minutes.   | 5-10%                 |
| <b>5. Check idle setting.</b> An excessively fast idle wastes gasoline. Have it adjusted and optimized.   | N/A                   |
| <b>6. Use Air Conditioning Economically.</b> Air conditioning can dramatically reduce fuel economy. Use air conditioners only when needed. Utilize the <i>economy</i> setting that allows circulation of un-chilled air or the <i>maximum</i> or <i>recirculation</i> setting that reduces the amount of hot outside air that must be chilled.  | N/A                   |

| <u>Measure</u> | <u>Savings</u> |
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| <b>7. Clean Air Filter.</b> A dirty air-filter increases fuel consumption and can cause poor performance. Check the air-filter twice a year, or more often in dusty conditions. | N/A |
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| <b>8. Check and Clean Radiators and Air Conditioners.</b> Clean heating and cooling systems prevent overheating and energy loss. A defective radiator thermostat can waste gas by extending the car's warm-up time or decreasing the engine's operating temperature. Remove foreign matter from radiators and air-conditioners. | N/A |
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| <b>9. Check Brakes.</b> A stuck brake caliper can create drag, which wastes fuel. Check brake and transmission fluids each month. Tighten belts and have frayed or cracked ones changed. Look for cracks, swelling or soft spots on hoses. Every 2,000 miles, or twice a year, have your brakes checked. | N/A |
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| <b>10. Perform General Maintenance Regularly.</b> Small problems can waste gas. | N/A |
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Make sure a replacement gas cap is the right one for your car. A poorly fitting cap can cause engine problems.

Check your battery every month to see if it needs water. Keep the connections fairly clean and free of corrosion.

Get an emissions test or tune-up where key emission control parts can be inspected, adjusted or replaced.

If your automatic choke sticks, have it repaired. It is wasting gasoline.

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| <b>11. Choose Regular Gas Unless Higher Grades are Required.</b> Purchase less expensive regular gasoline if your vehicle does not require premium or mid-grade fuel. Experiment to find the gasoline octane rating with which your car motor will not knock. Try a 50-50 mixture of higher octane gasoline mixed with a portion of lower octane gasoline. | N/A |
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### Economical Driving Behaviors

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| <b>12. Consider Vehicle Fuel Economy</b><br>When in the market for a new vehicle, consider its fuel economy. Today's vehicle fuel economy ranges from 10 miles per gallon to 70. At \$2 per gallon gasoline, this difference translates into paying as much as \$0.20 per mile or as little as \$0.03 per mile for gas. | 4-20% |
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| <u>Measure</u> | <u>Savings</u> |
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4-wheel drive vehicles may use more gasoline than other vehicles, especially when this function is engaged during routine driving. A vehicle with an automatic transmission may use more gasoline than one with a manual transmission. The choice of a smaller engine usually will result in better gas mileage. Cruise control may be a fuel saving option if you drive on open roads.

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| <b>13. Avoid “Cold Starts.”</b> A warmed-up engine uses less gas. Plan your driving and combine several errands into one car trip. | 10% |
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| <b>14. Use Alternative Transportation Modes.</b> For short trips, consider walking, biking or taking public transportation if available. Joining a car pool or van pools will cut driving expenses and fuel consumption, especially for commuters. Telecommute if and when possible. | N/A |
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| <b>15. Drive with a “Soft Foot.”</b> Smooth acceleration and deceleration saves gas. When you start your car, wait a few seconds for the oil to circulate and then drive off gently. Avoid sudden starts and stops. Make smooth, gradual lane changes. Build up speed in anticipation of approaching a hill. It takes 3 times more fuel to get up to cruising speed than to maintain it. | N/A |
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| <b>16. Avoid Unnecessary Idling.</b> Unnecessary idling wastes more gas than turning off and restarting the engine. Idling consumes ½ to 1 gallon of gas per hour. | N/A |
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| <b>17. Drive the speed limit.</b> Vehicles are most efficient at 50-55 miles per hour. For every mph above this, your vehicle consumes excess gas. | N/A |
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| <b>18. Don’t Top Off.</b> Do not top off your gas tank. In warm weather, fuel expansion can cause an overflow. | N/A |
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| <b>19. Remove unnecessary weight.</b> Remove any unnecessary weight from your car trunk. An extra 100 pounds in the car trunk can decrease your fuel economy by more than 1 percent. | 1-5% |
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| <b>20. Avoid Traffic Congestion Whenever Possible.</b> Being stuck in traffic wastes fuel. Start trips early in the day while traffic is light. Plan meal stops to coincide with likely periods of traffic congestion. | N/A |
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| <b>21. Track Your Mileage.</b> To see if your efforts are paying off, keep a record of car maintenance and track gas mileage on a monthly basis. Reset your trip meter each time you fill up the tank to allow precise observations. Poor mileage may indicate that your vehicle is not operating at peak performance and should be inspected. You can save on fuel by catching a problem early. | N/A |
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